

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAJ-01 OPR-02

AF-06 OPIC-03 /066 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4627

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USIA WASHDC

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USIA FOR IEU/MCLAUGHLIN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PINT, PO

SUBJ: MEDIA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: LISBON 5820

1. ATTACKS ON MINISTER OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: MINISTER ALMEIDA SANTOS, IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED OCTOBER 13 BY INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST "JORNAL NOVO," AND IN REPORTED DISCUSSIONS WITH ADMINISTRATORS OF THE STATE-FINANCED NEWSPAPER "O SECULO," HAS INDICATED THAT
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"IT WOULD MAKE NO SENSE FOR THE STATE-OWNED MEDIA TO CONTINUE,

AS IT SEEMS SOME ARE CONTINUING, TO FIGHT THE GOVERNMENT DIRECTLY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ASKING THE GOVERNMENT TO PAY FOR THE COSTS OF THIS CONFRONTATION. THE PUBLIC HAS TO BE RESPECTED IN ITS FREEDOM NOT TO PAY SUBSIDY COSTS FOR DEFICIT-RUNNING NEWSPAPERS WHICH IT DOES NOT LIKE TO READ." "O SECULO" ATTACKS THIS POSITION IN A LONG OCT. 15 ARTICLE AND PROMINENTLY PUBLISHES A REPORT ON A SIMILAR MOTION CRITICIZING ALMEIDA SANTOS WHICH WAS APPROVED IN A MEETING OF THE NEWLY FORMED "MOVEMENT OF INTELLECTUALS" (MUTIOR), MUTIOR HAS SOME WELL-KNOWN COMMUNIST PARTY AND OTHER MARXISTS AMONG ITS LEADERSHIP, AND APPEARS TO BE STARTING A LOBBY FOR "CONTROLLED CULTURAL APPROACHES" ALONG PREDICTABLE "REVOLUTIONARY LINES."

2. POLITICS WITHIN TELEVISION NETWORK: SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS AND ALLIES WITHIN THE STAFF OF THE STATE-OWNED TELEVISION WORK IN LISBON AND THREE OTHER CITIES FORMALLY COMPLAINED TO THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL OF THE NETWORK ON OCT. 14 ABOUT "MANIPULATION OF INFORMATION" IN PROGRAMMING DESIGNED "TO BRING DOWN" THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT. CLAIMING THAT THEY REPRESENT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF NETWORK EMPLOYEES, THE SOCIALIST WORKERS SPECIFICALLY COMPLAINED THAT THE NETWORK'S TECHNICAL FACILITIES FOR TAPING THE PRIME MINISTER'S MAJOR OCT. 13 ECONOMIC ADDRESS WERE INADEQUATE. SOCIALIST WORKERS ACCUSED THE RTP MILITARY ADMINISTRATORS OF PERMITTING PROGRAMMING WHICH "INTENTIONALLY HIDES THE TRUTH." THEY DEMANDED "URGENT MEASURES" TO "PUT AN END TO THESE OUTRAGES, OR ELSE THE SOCIALIST TELEVISION WORKERS WILL FEEL FREE TO TAKE MEASURES THE SITUATION REQUIRES."

3. IMPORTANT CHANGE IN TONE AT RADIO NETWORK: EMISSORA NACIONAL (EN), STATE-OWNED RADIO NETWORK, HAS SWITCHED MARKEDLY FROM SNIPING AT GOP POLICIES TO A MORE BALANCED PROFESSIONAL KIND OF PROGRAMMING AND NEWSCASTING UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ITS NEWLY APPOINTED PRESIDENT, MAJOR JOAO ANTONIO DE FIGUEIREDO, WHOM THE GOVERNMENT NAMED LITTLE MORE THAN A WEEK AGO. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY A HIGHLY CRITICAL COLUMN IN OCT. 13 COMMUNIST-DOMINATED "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" WHICH TERMS EN "THE SILENT RADIO," PAPER CONTENTS THE NETWORK HAS "RETURNED TO THE GOOD OLD TIMES" OF PRE-REVOLUTIONARY DAYS. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT EN HAS DENIED DISABLED VETERANS ACCESS TO THE STUDIOS AND UNEDITED AIRING OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEIR COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. NOT INCIDENTALLY, THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED NEWSPAPERS OCT. 15 CARRIED OFFICIAL PC COMMUNIQUE WHICH DENOUNCED ALLEGED "UNFAIR PRACTICES" IN CURRENT CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTION OF A NEW WORKERS' COMMISSION AT EN; SHRILL TONE OF COMMUNIQUE SUGGESTS THAT PC CANDIDATES ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CHANCES. EN EMPLOYEE HAS CONFIRMED TO LABATT THAT COMMUNISTS LACK SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO DO WELL IN WORKERS' COMMISSION ELECTIONS.

4. COMMENT: COMMUNIST-DOMINATED "O SECULO" IS IN DIRE FINANCIAL STRAITS, AND OBVIOUSLY FEELS DIRECTLY THREATENED BY MINISTER. "O SECULO" HAS BEEN A LEADER IN THE MEDIA ATTACK ON THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT. DEPENDENCE OF COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS ON GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES MAKES THEM VULNERABLE TO GOP PRESSURE, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE LIKELY TO HEIGHTEN ATTACKS ON GOVERNMENT IN THE SHORT RUN. CHANGE IN TONE AT EN AND CONTINUED SHUTDOWN OF RADIO RENASCENCA ARE TANGIBLE RESULTS OF TEMPORARY MILITARY OCCUPATION OF RADIO AND TV TWO WEEKS AGO; OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN IS CONTINUED STRIDENT ANTI-AZEVEDO APPROACH BY OTHER LEADING RADIO NETWORK, RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUES.
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